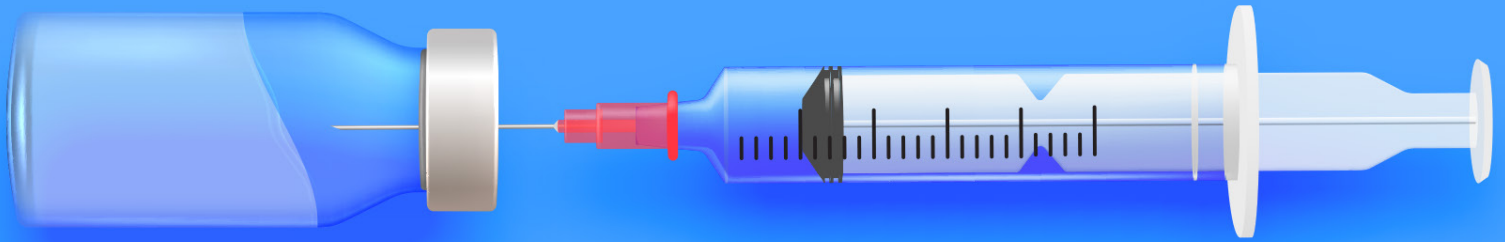


THE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

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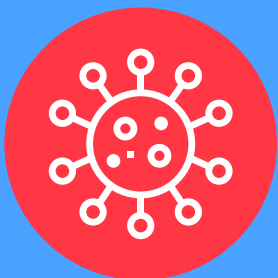
Are COVID-19 vaccines safe? **YES**

The COVID-19 vaccine technology had been in development for over a decade. This is because the COVID-19 virus is not altogether new to us: it is caused by a coronavirus. Prior to the current COVID-19 outbreak, scientists had been researching other coronavirus vaccines for diseases such as SARS and MERS. When the pandemic hit, scientists were able to build on this research (with more financial resources than ever before) to develop the COVID vaccines.



Can I get COVID-19 from taking the vaccine? **NO**

The vaccine does not cause COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines that are currently being distributed or in development contain the live COVID-19 virus. Rather, the vaccine prepares your immune system to recognize (and fight) the virus. However, it is important to note that since it typically takes 1-2 weeks for the body to build immunity against COVID-19 after you get the second vaccine dose, it is still possible for you to become infected or sick until a full 1-2 weeks after your second vaccine dose.



After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, will I test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test? **NO**

Neither the recently authorized and recommended vaccines nor the COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States can cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. If your body develops an immune response - the goal of vaccination - there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.



If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated? **YES**

Taking the vaccine even if you have had COVID-19 will help make sure you are protected. We don't know how long immunity to COVID-19 will last yet, and it is possible to contract COVID-19 more than once.



Will the flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19? NO

These are two different vaccines. Getting a flu vaccine will not protect you against COVID-19. But the flu vaccine can prevent you from getting influenza at the same time as COVID-19. This can keep you from having a more severe illness.



Do I need to wear a mask and avoid close contact with others if I have received the full vaccine? YES

Unfortunately, you do! It will be important to keep wearing masks, practicing physical distancing, and washing hands even after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. This is because while we know the vaccine is remarkably good at preventing serious illness, we do not yet know if it prevents you from getting -- and thus spreading -- the virus. You should continue to wear your mask even after being vaccinated until the spread of COVID-19 is under control.



Will the vaccine affect my DNA? NO

mRNA, the technology used in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, is not able to alter, interrupt, or impact your genetic makeup (DNA). Rather, it instructs our body on how to fight the virus. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease.



Will there be hidden costs associated with the vaccine? NO

All vaccines provided through the U.S. government will be free of charge to all individuals, including those without insurance. Health care providers will be allowed to charge a fee for giving the shots. For those who have insurance, your information will be collected so the vaccine provider can bill for administrative costs.



Do you know what's in the vaccine? YES

Pfizer and Moderna (manufacturers of the two vaccines authorized for emergency use as of January 1, 2021) published a list of all ingredients, which are currently posted on the FDA website. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines utilize a technology called messenger RNA (mRNA) which teaches your body how to respond to COVID-19, as well as lipids (fats) that help transport the vaccine into your body.



What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

You may have some side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine, which are normal signs that your body is building protection from the virus. The most common side effects from the vaccine are pain and swelling on the arm where you received the shot, fever, chills, tiredness, and headache (similar to flu vaccine side effects), which go away in a few days at most. The symptoms are more common after the second dose of the vaccine and the majority of side effects are mild. Side effects are signs that the vaccine is working to build immunity.